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DE RUEHSG #1022 3262009
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 212009Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3977
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3637
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2181
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1144
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0538
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1849
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5810
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4104
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1990
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 001022

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [OPRC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)
SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - NOVEMBER 21

Front Page News

11. All lead stories relate to the Senate's unanimous approval of a 10% salary increase for public employees, highlighting that this is the first two-digit increase the government has given the public sector in 13 years and a defeat for the Bachelet administration.

Local

12. After three days of talks and strikes, the Senate unanimously approved a 10% salary increase for all public employees that will become effective December 1. This is the first two digit increase in 13 years for fiscal employees and will amount to US\$ 1.648 billion. The approval is perceived as a tough loss for the government, which had proposed a 9.5% graduated increase that was rejected by all coalition congressmen, except four. The bill includes improved additional benefits (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 11/21).
U.S. related

13. A team of local and foreign experts on HIV/Aids control strategies and representatives from health organizations will be working for the next three months on a report with suggestions for the Health Ministry. Among the participants are officials from the U.S. Center for Disease Control La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, circ. 4,200, 11/21).

14. Defense journalist Raul Sohr wrote a column on Ayman al Zawahiri's remarks about Barack Obama:

"Jihadist organizations, which use terrorism to achieve their goals, want to present the U.S. President-elect as a 'white peoples 'messenger'.... The international enthusiasm awakened by Obama's election has reached the Middle East and this has Jihadists worried. Political leaders in this troubled region have expressed optimism for what they see as the end of an era of an unyielding attitude and hope to see new initiatives that will allow them to implement the peace plan and the respective road maps already designed.... Al Qaeda's angry reaction is a symptom of fear felt by those who base their proselytism and actions on the polarization of conflicts" (La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, circ. 4,200, 11/21).

15. The Federal Court of Manhattan found Chilean Luis Moreno Godoy and Syrian Monzer Al Kasser guilty of terrorism, money laundering, conspiracy to assault U.S. officials, and weapons

trafficking in connection with the FARC. Moreno was captured with Palestinian Tareq Mouza Al Gazhi in 2007 by U.S. and Spanish police agents and extradited to the United States (El Mercurio, and La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 11/21).

¶6. Chilean exports to North America dropped 6.2% in October compared to 2007, specifically 50% to Canada and 30.3% to the United States. The change was primarily due to a drop in refined copper exports (El Mercurio, 11/21).

Local

¶7. China's second-highest defense official, General Xu Caihou, met yesterday in La Moneda with President Bachelet and Defense Minister Jose Goi. Today the general will call on the Commanders in Chief of all military branches and visit several military facilities (La Nacion, 11/21).

Other

¶8. The National Geographic cruise vessel was not authorized to enter the Comau Fjord in southern Chile due to the recent eruption of the Chaiten volcano (La Tercera, 11/21).

URBAN